

Appl. No. 09/424,482

PATENT

Amdt. dated February 26, 2004

Response to Notice of Allowance January 15, 2004

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claim 1 has been amended for improved clarity. The Examiner's amendment mailed January 15, 2004, served to incorporate the additional element from previous claim 26 into claim 1. However, the additional phrase inserted into the claim, separates the word "respectively" from its original antecedent. Applicants thus request that claim be amended to include a second recitation of "respectively," thus making it clearer that this term applies to its original antecedent as well as the new phrase introduced into claim 1 from previous claim 26. Applicants also note that it is abundantly clear from dependent claims (e.g., claims 27 and 28) that the specified randomization includes but is not limited to positions 6 and 2 of adjacent first and second fingers. Under principles of claim differentiation, the independent claim is construed as being broader than claims depending from it. Thus, claim 1 also specifies randomization that includes but is not limited to positions 6 and 2 of adjacent first and second fingers. Applicants thus request that claim 1 be amended to recite expressly that the specified randomization occurs at least at positions 6 and 2 of adjacent first and second fingers, for improved clarity.

Applicants also request clarification whether the Examiner has considered the references in the information disclosure statement, a copy of which was attached to the notice of allowance. Although the Examiner has signed and dated the information disclosure statement as having considered the references, the Examiner has also drawn a diagonal line through the references. The Examiner has not provided any explanation why the references would not be considered, nor is one apparent. Thus, it is believed, that the references have been considered, and the diagonal line was used as a shorthand form to indicate that all of the references have been considered. However, if applicants have misconstrued the Examiner's intent, she is asked to call the undersigned to arrange for resubmission of the information disclosure statement.

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Entry of this amendment is respectfully urged since it merely serves to provide improved clarity and does not touch the merits.

Respectfully submitted,



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